

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:KGUTHRIE:CEH
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-----067446 111026Z /21
R 102111Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:US, PN, PGOV

SUBJECT:HOUSE ANTI-TREATY AMENDMENTS

1. TWO AMENDMENTS INTENDED TO HAMPER IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATIES HAVE SURFACED IN HOUSE IN RECENT DAYS.

2. BY VOTE OF 230 TO 171 HOUSE MAY 9 ADOPTED AMENDMENT BY REP. HANSEN (R-IDAHO) TO FY 79 BUDGET RESOLUTION PROVIDING THAT BUDGET OF PANAMA CANAL COMPANY AND CANAL ZONE GOVERNMENT BE INCORPORATED INTO GENERAL USG BUDGET. THIS WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF SUBJECTING COMPANY/GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES TO ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS.

3. IN STATEMENT TO PRESS AFTER VOTE HANSEN ADMITTED HIS AMENDMENT IS WITHOUT PRACTICAL EFFECT BUT CLAIMED IT WAS INTENDED TO SIGNAL HOUSE DISSATISFACTION WITH CANAL TREATIES. HANSEN ALSO HOPED TO SET PRECEDENT FOR HANDLING OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PANAMA CANAL COMMISSION FUNDS WHEN NEW TREATIES GO INTO EFFECT. IN LETTER SOLICITING SUPPORT FOR AMENDMENT, HE SAID IT WOULD OPEN WAY FOR HOUSE TO CLAIM RIGHT OF ANNUAL SCRUTINY OF PAYMENTS TO BE MADE TO PANAMA UNDER NEW TREATY.

4. IT IS GENERALLY EXPECTED HANSEN AMENDMENT WILL BE DELETED BY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. EVEN IF IT REMAINED IN

FINAL BUDGET RESOLUTION, IT COULD BE CARRIED INTO EFFECT ONLY THROUGH ENACTMENT OF ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION, WHICH IS UNLIKELY TO BE FORTHCOMING, SINCE HANSEN'S PROPOSAL IS OPPOSED BY RELEVANT COMMITTEES. THOSE WHO TOOK FLOOR TO OPPOSE HANSEN MEASURE INCLUDED CHAIRMAN MURPHY OF MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE, CHAIRMAN METCALFE OF PANAMA CANAL SUBCOMMITTEE AND MAJORITY LEADER JIM WRIGHT.

5. REP. LAGOMARSINO (R-CALIF.) IS REPORTEDLY PREPARING AMENDMENT TO FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT WHICH WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF REDUCING BILATERAL AID TO PANAMA AFTER NEW TREATIES GO INTO EFFECT. LAGOMARSINO'S AMENDMENT WOULD LIMIT ANNUAL BILATERAL AID TO 25 OF THAT PORTION OF ANNUITY PAYMENTS UNDER NEW TREATY THAT GOP DEVOTES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE BELIEVE LAGOMARSINO MEASURE COULD COME UP ON FLOOR AS EARLY AS MAY 10. VANCE

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